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United States Department of Agriculture

Farmers Home Administration

Program Aid Number 1184

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Home Improvement Loans and Grants

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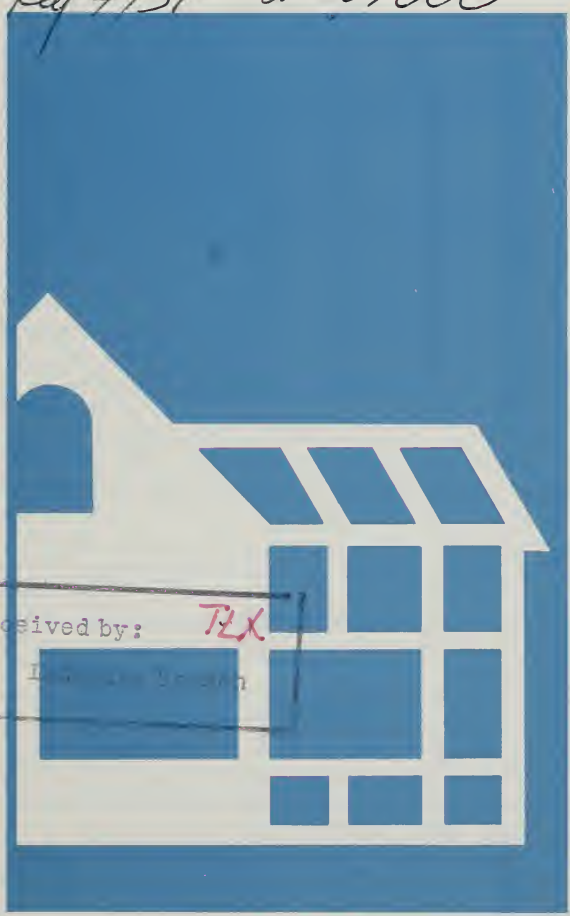
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245 **Home Improvement Loans and Repair Loans and Grants** 11

A rural homeowner whose house needs fixing up may be eligible for a loan and/or grant from Farmers Home Administration (FmHA).

The agency makes home improvement loans to people who may not need or cannot afford a new house, but need some work done on their present house to bring it up to minimum standards. It also makes loans as well as grants to homeowners to remove health or safety hazards from their dwellings. Grants are made only to low-income elderly homeowners, 62 years or older.

A borrower's income is the key to the type of assistance for which he or she is eligible.

If income is so low as to permit only removal of health and safety hazards, a repair loan and/or grant may be available.

For homeowners with somewhat higher income, a home improvement loan may be possible to bring the house up to minimum standards.

How Can Funds Be Used?

The ways in which repair loans and/or grants and home improvement loans can be used are very similar, and FmHA county supervisors will help borrowers determine the type of assistance that best fits their needs and for which they are eligible.

Generally, repair loans and grants may be used to remove health hazards by repairing roofs, providing a sanitary water and waste disposal system that meets local health department requirements, installing screens, windows, or insulation, or taking other steps to make the home safe.

Home improvement loans may include similar purposes, but may go further by bringing the home up to minimum standards and making changes for the convenience of the residents, such as adding a room, remodeling the kitchen, or otherwise modernizing the house.

What Are The Terms?

FmHA county supervisors will help families determine the type of assistance that is best suited to their needs and their income.

Very low-income families can receive up to \$5,000 in a loan, a combination loan and grant, or a full grant to remove health hazards. Loans up to \$1,500 must be repaid within 10 years, loans between \$1,500 and \$2,500 within 15 years, and loans over \$2,500 within 20 years. The interest rate is 1 percent.

To receive a combination loan and grant, an applicant must be 62 years or older and able to pay for only a part of the repairs.

To receive a full grant, the homeowner must be 62 years or older, and unable to pay for any repairs on the house.

Families with somewhat higher incomes can borrow up to \$7,000 to improve their homes. Loans can be made for up to 25 years. Interest rates are based on each household's income and usually will be 1, 2, or 3 percent.

Other home improvement loans are repayable in 33 years. These loans are made at the regular interest rate, or with "interest credits," depending upon family size and income.

Who Can Borrow?

If you own and live in a home on a farm, in the open country, or in towns of up to 10,000 population, you may qualify for a loan and/or grant if you cannot secure credit from regular commercial lenders. The homeowner must be 62 years or older to qualify for a grant or a combination loan and grant. This assistance is also available in some towns of 10,000 to 20,000 population. Your town may be in this category. To be sure, ask the FmHA county supervisor whether this assistance is available in your town.

What Security Is Required?

A real estate mortgage is required for loans of more than \$2,500, and in some instances may be required for smaller loans. If the loan is under \$2,500, but income is small so that repaying the loan will be difficult, someone may co-sign the loan note with the borrower.

Homeowners who receive a grant or a combination loan and grant must agree not to sell the house on which grant funds are used for up to 3 years.

Where Do You Apply?

Go to the local county office of the Farmers Home Administration. The office address can be found in the telephone directory under "U.S. Government-Agriculture." Or write directly to the Farmers Home Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Are There Other Conditions?

Applications from eligible veterans are given preference. Veterans and nonveterans must meet the same requirements.

Each person who applies will receive equal consideration regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, handicap, or national origin.

What Other Credit Is Available?

Farmers Home Administration can make loans to build homes, buy existing ones, or to build rental apartments for low-income or elderly people. FmHA also can make loans to buy or operate family farms, build water and waste disposal systems, or establish community facilities such as fire stations, clinics, or community centers. It can guarantee loans to help establish job-producing businesses and industries.



Farmers Home Administration is an Equal Opportunity Lender. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to: Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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